

## **JALANA's Comment on the US Nuclear Policy Change and Japanese Government's Reaction**

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The United States is reportedly considering a “no first use” policy of nuclear weapons. The “no first use” policy means not to use nuclear weapons preemptively, i.e. one might use those weapons only to counter nuclear strikes. Given the current nuclear posture, under which the US might use nuclear weapons depending on military necessity even to counter conventional attacks, this policy change would lead to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. It is also said to be one of concrete steps by the Obama administration toward a “world free of nuclear weapons.”

There is no reason for opposing to such a policy change that would reduce the role of nuclear weapons. However the risk of nuclear war still remains because nuclear retaliation is yet to be abandoned. Even so, if all nuclear weapon states take “no first use” policies, the risk of nuclear war between nuclear powers would be solved. In addition, if nuclear weapon states fully implement “negative security assurance” policies, under which they shall refrain from nuclear strikes against non-nuclear weapon states, the risk of nuclear weapons use would be removed from the earth. The final challenge would be abolition of those weapons. Thinking in such a context, the policy shift of the Obama administration is worth appreciating.

By the way, Japanese government has not agreed with this US policy change. The reason is that such a change would weaken deterrent against North Korea and China, and would be unacceptable from the standpoint of its security. Japan is asking the US to review this policy change and to keep an option for nuclear strikes even if “enemy countries” have not used those weapons. This indicates that Japan might request a first use of nuclear weapons from the US. The government of the atomic-bombed country is disturbing the US from reducing the role of nuclear weapons. Such attitude not only contradicts their own advocacy to reduce the role of nuclear weapons but also shows an attempt to allow a use of those weapons even not in an

“extreme circumstance of self-defense” mentioned in the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. There is no word but outrageous to describe this behavior of the government of the very atomic-bombed country.

Today North Korea is repeatedly testing nuclear bombs and missile launch, regarding them as deterrent. The nuclear deterrence, according to which nuclear weapons allegedly guarantee the sovereignty and the security of a country, eventually results in advancing nuclear proliferation.

On the other hand, the international community is making efforts to realize a “world without nuclear weapons,” highlighting humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. However, nuclear weapon states and nuclear-dependent states including Japan are throwing a wet blanket on this initiative, maintaining that nuclear weapons are indispensable for national security.

President Obama and Prime Minister Abe, on May 27, laid flowers at the memorial monument, which says: “Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil.” That act contradicts their policies to continue depending on nuclear weapons. A “world without nuclear weapons” should be created by collaboration and leadership of the first country who used nuclear weapons and the first one who suffered their attacks.

What the legacy of the Obama administration is to be will be determined by power balance between our approach and that of Japanese government and those who depend on nuclear weapons inside the US.

Though we do not overestimate the US policy change, the behavior of Japanese government that disturbs the policy change is unforgivable.

We strongly demand Japanese government to stop working on the US that would reverse the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligation under Article VI of the NPT.